

HARTFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

FIRE	SOP: 119
Cancer Awareness/Prevention	PAGE: 1-3
APPROVED BY: Scott D. Cooney, Fire Chief	EFFECTIVE DATE: 3-7-19

Purpose:

This policy is written to bring an awareness to the members of the Hartford Fire Department on the high incidence of cancer within the fire service. Cancer is now the leading cause of on-duty deaths amongst firefighters. Since 2002, 60% of firefighter deaths have been attributed to cancer according to the IAFF. Fire Service Personnel have a significantly higher rate of cancers among its members when compared to the general public. This policy is intended to provide members with actions that they can take to limit their exposure to the carcinogens that we are exposed to as part of our occupation. Most of these actions are “common sense” actions and should be done routinely. Others require a cultural change in which members must re-think how things have been done in the past and make changes accordingly. The focus of this policy is on the health and well-being of all members. Please remember to consider your health, the health of your co-workers, and the impact that cancer can have on your family. Please refer to the numerous studies that have been conducted on cancer within the fire service.

Objective:

To provide specific actions that members can take, both at the fire scene and around the fire station, which will have a positive impact on their health and reduce the risk of developing certain cancers. Specific areas of concern are Personal Protective Clothing, Fire Scene Decontamination Practices, Storage of Personal Protective Clothing, and Vehicle/Diesel Exhaust.

Action Areas:

Personal Protective Equipment

- All firefighters will be issued a 2nd hood. This will allow firefighting personnel to be able to wash and dry one hood after every use, thus allowing a clean hood for use at all times. The areas of the scalp and angle of the jaw are among the most absorbent areas of the body. Currently, our hoods are not manufactured with a moisture barrier. It is obvious then, that the hood must be kept as free of contaminants as possible. Hoods may be washed in the extractor on a gentle cycle setting. Laundry detergent shall be used to clean the hoods but bleach shall never be used. The hoods can be placed in a clothes

dryer. Please run one additional wash cycle to clean the washing machine after washing your hood.

- Removing gear to return to the station is recommended and shall be done whenever personnel are exposed to products of combustion.
- Contaminated gear should be cleaned in the extractor and hung to dry in a timely manner following contamination.
- Shower as soon as possible after being exposed to products of combustion or other contaminants.
- Station uniforms worn under bunker gear that has been exposed to products of combustion or other contaminants, shall be changed as soon as possible and washed.
- Apparatus seats should be cleaned and decontaminated regularly, especially after incidents where passengers were exposed to products of combustion.
- Full bunker gear and SCBAs shall be worn through overhaul operations when products of combustion and/or gases and vapors are present.
- At no time shall bunker gear be allowed in any living quarters, this includes the kitchen area, offices, and all upstairs areas.
- No training that involves the wearing or use of PPE, hose, or similarly exposed/contaminated firefighting equipment will be permitted to take place in living areas of the station.

Fire Incident Decontamination:

- Protective clothing and equipment that is presumed to have been exposed to hazardous substances shall be appropriately decontaminated before returning to quarters.
- All Hartford Fire Department members that may have been exposed to products of combustion or other hazardous substances shall clean their skin prior to consuming any food or water while on the fire scene.
- All Hartford Fire Department members that may have been exposed to hazardous substance shall clean their skin immediately after doffing Respiratory Protection and Personal Protective Equipment.
- All Hartford Fire Apparatus shall have Handi-Wipes for members to use to wipe contaminants from their face, neck and hands.
- Any Contaminated bunker gear shall be cleaned with water prior to leaving the fire scene.
- Wet Decon – Immediate wet decon is essential to reducing contaminants that may have settled on your bunker gear (ex: asbestos, particulates, etc.). Therefore, wet decon is required anytime your gear may have been exposed to products of combustion or other contaminants, or if the Incident Commander or Company Officer deems it necessary. Every effort should be made to wet decon as soon as possible, preferably while still on scene. Use a garden hose, at pump pressure idle, with a half-opened nozzle. Rinse at a downward angle from top to bottom.
- Dry Decon – In cold weather where freezing is a concern, members can be Dry Deconned using a hand-held brush to remove all loose particles and soot from the gear prior to being bagged.

- All PPE exposed to products of combustion shall be removed and bagged prior to leaving the fire scene. Contaminated gear will be placed in the back of utility and returned to the station for proper cleaning.
- All contaminated gear is to remain bagged until being placed into the extractor.
- Members are encouraged to bring their own clothing/footwear to wear while returning to the Station once their contaminated gear has been removed. Spare clothing (sweat pants, sweat shirt and footwear) will be placed on Engine 4 and the Rescue for members to use should they need it.
- Members handling contaminated gear for cleaning shall wear an N95 mask and disposable gloves for protection. If needed, they may also wear Tyvek Coveralls. All needed protective gear will be stored by the extractor.

Vehicle/Diesel Exhaust:

- Ensure that at all times when apparatus is parked in quarters that the station exhaust system (Plymovent) is attached and operational.
- Ensure that prior to entering the apparatus bay the Plymovent System is attached to the vehicle.
 - Vehicle must stop when entering and have the exhaust boot connected prior to backing completely into the bay.
 - Once the boot is connected, the back-up guide will direct the driver to finish backing into the bay.
- Ensure that any malfunctions or system problems are reported appropriately and promptly for maintenance.
- All doors leading to living space from the apparatus floor should remain closed at all times to limit exposure to diesel exhaust fumes. These areas include, but are not limited to the following: kitchen, offices and second floor living spaces.

Cancer Screenings:

- Since firefighters have a significantly higher incidents of cancer than the general, it is imperative that members get screened annually for cancers. Cancer screenings shall be conducted annually as part of the department physicals. Screenings shall be conducted in accordance with medically accepted practices.

Cancer Awareness/Training:

- Members shall have training provided on a regular basis throughout the year on the importance of cancer awareness and prevention. Since a majority of this policy is based on changing habits and culture within the fire service organization, to be successful it must be stressed continuously.